M8032
[NUC]

Serm. 23.

A Farewel Sermon

Preached at the

TABERNACLE IN SPITTLE-FIELDS.

By LUKE MILBOURN, *Presbyter, and Curate there.*

Published at the Request of the Hearers.

LONDON;

Printed for *Brabazon Aylmer*, at the Sign of the *Three Pigeons* in *Cornhill*, 1699.

A

Farewel Sermon.

PHILIPPIANS IV. 9.

Thoſe things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do; and the God of Peace ſhall be with you.

COULD my moſt earneſt *Prayers*, or my *Willingneſs* to have ſtruggled with the greateſt Difficulties and Diſcouragements, or to ſpend my ſelf in indefatigable *Labours* and *Studies* for *you*, have prevailed with Almighty *God*; or had *His* All-wiſe *Providence* ſeen it good to find out any thing about this City conſiſtent with *my Care for You*, there had been no Occaſion given for our preſent *neceſſary Separation*. I never was ambitious of any *great Things* in the *Church*; an opportunity of *ſtudying* and *promoting the Salvation of others*, without diſturbance, has ever been my utmoſt Aim; and the *Devil*, and *wicked Men* have, at all times, been very active to hinder me. The *Miniſtry of God's holy Word* was what I was *originally* devoted to, and the faithful *Execution* of that *Miniſtry* is the greateſt Eye-ſore to the *Prince of Darkneſs*. But however, ſince there muſt

be a *Separation* between us, it's my great Satisfaction that *my Conſcience* cannot accuſe me of any *Unfaithfulneſs* in my Employment among you. I have Preached no *Falſe Doctrines* among you, nor have I robb'd the Treaſures of *other Mens Labours* to Preach to you; I have ſet you no *Ill Examples*, nor fomented any *Broils* or *Quarrels* among you; but now, when I come to take my ſolemn *Leave* of you, I can, with a clear and quiet *Conſcience*, ſpeak to *you* in the *Apoſtle*'s Language, *Thoſe things which you have both learned, and received, and ſeen, and heard in me do; and the God of Peace ſhall be with you.*

That the *Apoſtle* could cloſe his *Epiſtle to his dear Flock at Philippi* with *ſuch* Expreſſions, was to the Honour of the *Goſpel*, and was the Compleating of his own *Happineſs*. That a *dying Miniſter of Chriſt*, when he ſpeaks *his laſt Words* to *his People*, can ſay the *ſame things* to *them*, is an inconceivable *Comfort*; and, thanks be to God, that I, one of the meaneſt of his Ambaſſadors, *have obtained mercy of the Lord to be Faithful*, (1 Cor. 7. 25.) that I, who am now *dying a Civil Death* to *you*, can give the *ſame Charge* to you, and not doubt of the *ſame* happy *Conſequence*, if you obſerve and keep it.

The *Sum* of all our Apoſtle's Writings was to endear *Chriſtianity* by all ſuitable means, both to *thoſe who were without*, and *thoſe who were within* the Pale of the *Church of Chriſt*, and the *ſame* is the ſubſtance of this *Chapter*. As there always is a *dearneſs of Affection* between a *faithful Teacher* and a *willing People*, ſo it appears there was ſuch a *mutual Tenderneſs* between St. *Paul* and the *Philippians*; *Therefore*, ſays he, *my brethren, dearly beloved, my joy and my crown, even ſo ſtand faſt in the Lord, my dearly beloved*: All the pretences between Men to a *carnal worldly Love*, are nothing when compared with the *Bowels* of a *ſpiritual Father*; for *He* who rightly weighs the *Worth* of an immortal *Soul*;

he

he whom God accounts ſo far faithful, as to Honour him with a Capacity of aſſiſting to the *Salvation* of any Man. He who conſiders how inevitable *Damnation* is to *himſelf*, in caſe of *Infidelity to his Truſt*, and how ineſtimable a *Crown* ſhall be his Reward, in caſe he diſcharges his *Duty* ſincerely, and purſues it earneſtly; He who reflects on *theſe things*, muſt love thoſe *Souls* for whom his Maſter *ſhed his moſt precious Blood*, far beyond any thing which the *deareſt Friends* in the World, without *ſuch* a Relation, can pretend to. After theſe *Expreſſions of Love*, he promotes *Unity* and *Charity*, and then, conſecrating the Name of ſome *eminent Saints* to futurity, he gives ſeveral *general* Advices, or Exhortations.

He adviſes them to ſpiritual Joy, the beſt ſupport of a Chriſtian, when encompaſs'd with the greateſt Difficulties, *Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again, I ſay rejoice*, ver. 4.

He adviſes them to convince the World of the *Excellency* of their *Holy Religion*, by the evident *Amendment* of their *natural Tempers* who profeſs it; *Let your moderation be known unto all men*; the *reaſon* of which ſtands ſtill in full force, *for the Lord is at hand*, ver. 5

He teaches them not to torment themſelves with *worldly Cares*, *i. e.* not to be too ſollicitous about what they ſhould eat, or drink, or wherewith they ſhould be clothed; to be *diſtruſtfully careful for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving, to let their Requeſts be made known to God. Honeſt Induſtry* attended with a *faithful dependance* on the Goodneſs and Bleſſing of God, would be a ſufficient Security for their ſubſiſtence in this World, *ver.* 5.

To encourage his *Philippians* to theſe things, he tells them, that, in caſe of Obedience, *the Peace of God*, a Bleſſing more valuable than all the Friendſhips of the World, *that Peace which paſſes all underſtanding*, whoſe power and

energy none have any agreeable Conceptions of but thoſe who have it, that happy Peace *ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds through Jeſus Chriſt.* That *heavenly Peace* can have no place where too much *carefulneſs* reigns; but where the *World* has no poſſeſſion, there the *Bleſſed Jeſus* takes up his Reſidence, and all is Heaven about the believing Soul, *ver.* 7.

To Sum up *all his Injunctions* in one *compendious Rule*, he adds, what I would have you take as ſpoken by *me* to *you*, on the *ſame Reaſon*, and by the *ſame Authority*. *Finally, my Brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely,, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe in the ways of Holineſs, think on theſe things*; and to enforce this Summary of Chriſtian Duty, he ſubjoins, *Thoſe things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do*; *and the God of Peace be with you*, i. e.

Whoever is an *Ambaſſador* or *Miniſter commiſſioned by Chriſt*, ought to be *apt to teach*, to ſhew Men the way to Heaven; a *juſt Credit* ought to be given by good Men to *ſuch a Miniſter*, and his *Doctrine* to be believed and embraced; he ought to have a *good Report* among *good Men*, and *among ſuch as are without*, and he ought to be an *Example to Believers in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity*, (1 Tim. 4. 12.) ſuch a Teacher have I been to you, and you have pretended to receive the Word which I preach'd. The *Enemies of the Goſpel* have been able to prove nothing of ill againſt me, and your *ſelves* have ſeen my *Converſation* how blameleſs and innocent it has been among you; *Be ye therefore followers of me, as I have been of Chriſt*; let my *Example* make a juſt impreſſion on your Minds, and my *Doctrine* be read in your Lives, and then the *God of Peace*, your Lord and your Saviour, will ſo influence your Minds by his *Spirit*, that you

ſhall

ſhall be partakers of *inward Peace* here, and of *eternal Peace* hereafter. The words then contain,

I. The *Character of a faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt*; He muſt be a good Teacher, a Man of a good Character, and a Man of an Exemplary Life and Converſation, or *One of whom Men may learn, and hear, and ſee only what's good and tends to edification.*

II. Here's *the Character and Duty of a pious People*; They ought to hear, and to believe, and to put in practice what ſuch a Miniſter delivers to them; *what they learn, receive, hear, and ſee, they ought to do.*

III. Here's *the Happineſs attending ſuch a People*; *The God of Peace ſhall be with them.* They ſhall be bleſt with the extraordinary Influences of his Spirit, and find Peace in their own Boſoms, whatſoever *Storms* they meet with from the *Devil* or the *World.*

1. The Text gives us the *Character of a faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt*; A *faithful Miniſter* I inſtance in, becauſe *every One* who takes upon himſelf the work of Preaching to others, is not ſuch a Miniſter: There were thoſe of old who could *run* forth in the *Name of God*, and yet were not ſent by him; who would *propheſie, though God had not ſpoken to them*, Jerem. 23. 21. Nor were the *Jews* only liable to this Miſchief, for our *Saviour* tells his *Diſciples*, that, under the Times of the Goſpel, *there ſhould ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets, and ſhould ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch that, if it were poſſible, they ſhould deceive the very Elect*, Mat. 24. 44. And St. *Peter* lays both theſe Ages together, and tells the *Chriſtians*, that *there were falſe Prophets among the Jews, even as there ſhall be falſe Teachers among us, who, privily, ſhall bring in damnable Hereſies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction*: And, what's more unhappy yet, *many ſhall follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of*, 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2.

And

energy none have any agreeable Conceptions of but thoſe who have it, that happy Peace *ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds through Jeſus Chriſt.* That *heavenly Peace* can have no place where too much *carefulneſs* reigns; but where the *World* has no poſſeſſion, there the *Bleſſed Jeſus* takes up his Reſidence, and all is Heaven about the believing Soul, *ver.* 7.

To Sum up *all his Injunctions* in one *compendious Rule*, he adds, what I would have you take as ſpoken by *me* to *you*, on the *ſame Reaſon*, and by the *ſame Authority. Finally, my Brethren, whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely,, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praiſe in the ways of Holineſs, think on theſe things*; and to enforce this Summary of Chriſtian Duty, he ſubjoins, *Thoſe things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, do*; *and the God of Peace be with you*, i. e.

Whoever is an *Ambaſſador* or *Miniſter commiſſioned by Chriſt*, ought to be *apt to teach*, to ſhew Men the way to Heaven; a *juſt Credit* ought to be given by good Men to *ſuch a Miniſter*, and his *Doctrine* to be believed and embraced; he ought to have a *good Report* among *good Men*, and *among ſuch as are without*, and he ought to be an *Example to Believers in Word, in Converſation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity*, (1 Tim. 4. 12.) ſuch a Teacher have I been to you, and you have pretended to receive the Word which I preach'd. The *Enemies of the Goſpel* have been able to prove nothing of ill againſt me, and your *ſelves* have ſeen my *Converſation* how blameleſs and innocent it has been among you; *Be ye therefore followers of me, as I have been of Chriſt*; let my *Example* make a juſt impreſſion on your Minds, and my *Doctrine* be read in your Lives, and then the *God of Peace*, your Lord and your Saviour, will ſo influence your Minds by his *Spirit*, that you

ſhall

ſhall be partakers of *inward Peace* here, and of *eternal Peace* hereafter. The words then contain,

I. The *Character of a faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt*; He muſt be a good Teacher, a Man of a good Character, and a Man of an Exemplary Life and Converſation, or *One of whom Men may learn, and hear, and ſee only what's good and tends to edification.*

II. Here's *the Character and Duty of a pious People*; They ought to hear, and to believe, and to put in practice what ſuch a Miniſter delivers to them; *what they learn, receive, hear, and ſee, they ought to do.*

III. Here's *the Happineſs attending ſuch a People*; *The God of Peace ſhall be with them.* They ſhall be bleſt with the extraordinary Influences of his Spirit, and find Peace in their own Boſoms, whatſoever *Storms* they meet with from the *Devil* or the *World.*

1. The Text gives us the *Character of a faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt*; A *faithful Miniſter* I inſtance in, becauſe *every One* who takes upon himſelf the work of Preaching to others, is not ſuch a Miniſter: There were thoſe of old who could *run* forth in the *Name of God*, and yet were not ſent by him; who would *propheſie, though God had not ſpoken to them*, Jerem. 23. 21. Nor were the *Jews* only liable to this Miſchief, for our *Saviour* tells his *Diſciples*, that, under the Times of the Goſpel, *there ſhould ariſe falſe Chriſts, and falſe Prophets, and ſhould ſhew great ſigns and wonders, inſomuch that, if it were poſſible, they ſhould deceive the very Elect*, Mat. 24. 44. And St. *Peter* lays both theſe Ages together, and tells the *Chriſtians*, that *there were falſe Prophets among the Jews, even as there ſhall be falſe Teachers among us, who, privily, ſhall bring in damnable Hereſies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction*: And, what's more unhappy yet, *many ſhall follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of*, 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2.

And

And I may, with reſpect to theſe Paſſages, ſay, as our Saviour did in another caſe, *This day is this Scripture fulfilled in our ears:* We have many Pretenders to the *Paſtoral Office*, who, having no Authority for that *Office* they aſſume, *make Merchandiſe of Souls with feigned Words, through their unreaſonable Covetouſneſs*, and under this *Calamity* the *Church* of *England* ſmarts ſeverely at this time.

The *Salvation of Souls* is a noble, as well as divine Employ, but it's extreamly *hazardous*, as well as *laborious*. God has appointed an *Order of Men* particularly to engage themſelves in the *Work*, but I fear the generality of profeſt Chriſtians have a very *falſe Notion* of their *Buſineſs*; as if their *Work* were no more than that of *Men following their ordinary Trades*, in which, if they thrive and get Money apace, they are ſuppoſed to acquit themſelves very well. I confeſs, it would render the Task much eaſier, could but all thoſe who are called to the *Service of the Altar*, ſit down quietly with that Opinion; but though that *Lunacy* prevails too far, all of us, thanks be to God, are not yet *touched* with it; our Buſineſs is of the greateſt weight, and, *who is ſufficient for theſe things?* is a reaſonable Queſtion. Where Men *come in at the door*, according to Chriſt's appointment, *ſpiritual Aſſiſtances* and a *Bleſſing* are promiſed to their *Labours*. But where Men *come over the Wall*, or irregularly, though their *Parts* are never ſo great, their *Induſtry* never ſo commendable, their *Sobriety* and *Sanctity* never ſo plauſible, they never are, nor can be, *faithful Miniſters*, becauſe they are no *Miniſters at all of Jeſus Chriſt*. But, ſuppoſing *an Ambaſſador of Heaven lawfully ſent*, he muſt, according to the Text, have theſe Qualities to recommend him.

1. He muſt be a *good Teacher*; he muſt be διδακτικὸς, *fit to teach*, or *apt* for that Work, as the Apoſtle phraſes it, 1 *Tim.* 3. 2. *i. e.* He who is a *good Teacher*, muſt underſtand the *Work of Inſtruction* throughly; his *Reading*, his *Study*, his own

own *Experience*, and the *Grace of God*, humbly implor'd, muſt fit him to his Work. He muſt have the *Pathetic Eloquence* of a *good Pleader*, that he may uſe acceptable Words, and enforce them in their proper places; he muſt have the *tenderneſs* of a *Father*, to compaſſionate the Infirmities of the *Weak*, and the general dangerous Condition of *careleſs* Sinners; he muſt have the *Skill* of an expert *Chirurgeon*, to handle the *Wounds of the Mind* gently, to ſearch and cleanſe them throughly, to apply his Cauſtics or his Lenitives ſeaſonably, and to heal them at laſt with prudence and diſcretion: He muſt have the *Temper* of a *Philoſopher*, to exerciſe Patience when aſſaulted by the Ignorance of ſome, the ſlowneſs and impertinence of others, when *Line upon Line*, and *Precept upon Precept* are altogether ineffectual: He muſt have the *Learning* of a *Rabbin*, be throughly verſt in *Scripture*, and knowing in *Humane Writings*, that he may aſſert *Truth* with a ſacred *Authority*, and baffle *Error* with undeniable *Reaſon*: He muſt have the *ſteadineſs* and *ſolidity* of an *inſpired Perſon*, that he may reſtrain others from waving, be always like *himſelf*, ſound in his *Principles*, and charitable and exemplary in his *Practices*: He muſt have the *ſincerity* of a *Friend*, that he may be impartial in his Reflections and Advices; the *Meekneſs* and *Humility* of a *Moſes* or a *Saviour*, that he may, without Haughtineſs, condeſcend to the pooreſt; and the *Zeal* of a *Martyr*, that nothing may affright him from his heavenly Work.

Theſe *Qualifications* muſt all of them concurr, in ſome meaſure, in a *good Teacher*; and, tho he muſt be no *Wrangler*, nor *Diſputatious*, yet he muſt be able and ready to defend the *Truths* of *God*, againſt all *Heretical* and *Atheiſtical Gainſayers*; he muſt keep a careful *Watch* over his *Flock*, that neither the *Boars*, the *Wolves*, the *Foxes*, nor the *little Foxes* may be able to break in upon them. And he muſt not confine his Labours to the *Days of Publick Service* only, but he muſt

Preach

Preach every day by his *Life* and by his *Example*: He muſt be ready to diſcourſe in private with thoſe who come to him for Reſolution of Difficulties, for quieting the *Conſcience*, for rectifying the *Judgment*, and informing of the *Underſtanding*: He ought to be an *Oracle* to his *People*, whom they may conſult upon all occaſions; who may preſent his Prayers to God for them with an indefatigable Ardour; who may draw out of his Treaſures *things both new and old* for their good; who may *bind up the broken-hearted, preach deliverance to the Captives, recovering of ſight to the Blind, and ſet at liberty ſuch as are bruiſed*: He muſt follow them, find them out, and reduce them in their Wandrings. And all theſe things he muſt do with ſuch earneſtneſs, take ſuch delight in his Work, and be ſo far pleaſed with his Succeſs, if any at all, that all may ſee *it's his Meat and his Drink to do the will of him who ſent him.*

2. The *Faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt*, muſt be one of a *good Character*, one of whom we may hear well. Every *lawful Preacher* or *Paſtor* is not *Faithful* in his *Office*; a *Judas* may get in among the *Diſciples of the bleſſed Jeſus* himſelf; and the Devil, as he appears ſometimes as an *Angel of Light*, ſo he often teaches *ill Men* cunning enough to inſinuate themſelves into the *good Opinion* of *Church-Governours*, who are but *Men* and *fallible*, and by that means to get *hands laid upon them*. St. *Paul* had his *Demas*, falſe to his Commiſſion; and *Simon Magus* might have paſt upon the *Apoſtles* themſelves, had they not been immediately illuminated by the *Holy Ghoſt*. Such Men may appear as *Angels* in the *Pulpit*, but be no better than *Devils* when they are out of it: Such were the *Phariſees* of old, and *Scribes* and *Lawyers*, lawful Teachers, and therefore to be *heard*, where there was no choice; but wicked Wretches, therefore not to be *imitated*, becauſe every day afforded better Examples. Now *weak Heads*, who would rather have their *Ears* tickled, than their

Souls

Soul's ſaved, may be very fond of *ſounding Braſs*, and of *tinkling Cymbals*; *wiſe Men* and *good Chriſtians* look upon ſuch as the Plague of the Church, the Scandals of Religion, and the Harbingers of Deſtruction. Men of *ſmall Underſtanding* in Divine Matters may run after them. Thoſe who have their *Senſes better Exerciſed*, pray earneſtly to be deliver'd from them. Men of *ill Morals*, wicked and debauched Wretches, without *Reaſon* and without *Conſcience*, may love ſuch, as moſt reſembling, and therefore in ſome meaſure excuſing themſelves: Men of *Holy and Chriſtian Lives* fear them as they would Monſters, and fly from them as they would from Wolves and Tygers; yet *ſuch Men* as *theſe* have found means to creep into all *Churches* from the beginnings of Chriſtianity till the preſent time; and our own unhappy *Church* feels every day, the cruel *Wounds* ſhe receives from ſuch an unnatural *Off-ſpring*.

But a *Faithful Miniſter* will have a *good Character* from all thoſe who love Goodneſs; *Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth*, i. e. It ſounds ſo well, it is ſo pure, ſo holy, and conſequently ſo charming and delightful, that *therefore the Virgins*, all the *true Profeſſors* of true *Religion*, *love thee*; ſo ſays the *Church* to her *Spouſe* in the *Canticles* 1. 3. where *Learning*, *Sobriety and Innocence* appear in one of *Heaven's Ambaſſadors*. Thoſe who endeavour after the ſame Perfections will find them out. *Holy Souls* will *ſympathize* with one another, and like ſtrings in a Viol tun'd to the ſame Note, reſt, and move, and ſound together. A *good Man* will endeavour to hide the *Faults* of *God's Prieſts*, unleſs they be too notorious and undeniable; and therefore he'll certainly give his Teſtimony to their *Virtues*, and recommend their Piety to the World, ſince nothing tends more to the *Honour* of our *common Maſter* than the *Holineſs* of his more immediate *Servants*. This will make even ſuch as are envious and angry *Enemies* to the Perſon, yet celebrate his Merits, and do right to his Reputation.

Now to be Praiſed and Applauded by an unthinking *Multitude*, to be *cry'd up* and almoſt *deified* by ſuch as can have no Notion of real Worth, is no more pleaſing to a Man of a truly *Apoſtolical Spirit*, than the Applauſes of the *Lyſtrians* were to *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when they brought *Oxen and Garlands, and would have offer'd ſacrifice to them*, and fancied *the Gods were come down to them in the likeneſs of Men*, Acts 14. 11, 13. The good Opinions of ſuch are eaſily bought and ſold, and no wiſe Man, unleſs he has ſome by-deſign to carry on, can value himſelf upon them. But when *Men of Unſtanding*, who have themſelves a good Reputation among thoſe of the beſt Judgments, give their Atteſtations to the *Merits* of a *Goſpel Miniſter*; when Men of other *Perſwaſions* and *Intereſts* acknowledge the *Juſtice* of ſuch Atteſtations; when thoſe who are without the *Pale of the Church*, who look upon the *Profeſſion* of *Chriſtianity* it ſelf to be no better than an impertinent Sham, or a meer Politick Invention, to keep Men of mean Parts in awe; when ſuch Men ſhall, notwithſtanding all theſe ſlight Thoughts of Religion, aſſert the *Innocence* and *excellent Endowments* of one of the *Teachers* of Chriſtianity; when he ſhall call him a *very good Man*, abating only his Name and Profeſſion, ſuch a Man ought to be valued, he comes up to the Character of a *Primitive Paſtor*, or *Biſhop*; he has a *good Report of ſuch as are without*, as well as ſuch as are *within*, and therefore is in the leſs danger of *falling into Reproach, and the ſnare of the Devil*, 1 Tim. 3. 7. This *good Character* then is what is juſtly requir'd as the *Teſt* of a *Faithful Miniſter* of Chriſt. Good and wiſe Men will not be drawn to *proſtitute* their *Names* to the Intereſts of ill Men; and where I ſee a Teſtimonial given by any to a *careleſs, unletter'd or immoral Man*, I'm ſo far from thinking the better of *him*, that I think the worſe of *them*, and conclude, That the *Honour of Religion* and of the *Church* is very little eſteem'd by them.

3. The

3. The *Faithful Miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt* ought to be a Man of an *Exemplary Life* and *Converſation*. He cannot be *Faithful* in his Station, be it never ſo high in the Church of Chriſt, who has not *this* to Crown all his other Attainments. *Examples* are of a far greater Influence than *Rules* or *Doctrines*. I may talk a great deal and very Learnedly on the Reaſons of ſuch or ſuch a Mechanic Operation, and few may underſtand me; let them ſee me practiſe upon my *Rule*, they'll apprehend me preſently, and be ſoon able to do the like. Hence the Apoſtle requires, that a *Biſhop ſhould be blameleſs, the husband of one wife, vigilant, ſober, of good behaviour, given to hoſpitality, not given to wine, no ſtriker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth his own houſe well*, 1 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4. To which he adds, He muſt be no *ſelf-will'd man, but a lover of good men, ſober, juſt, holy, temperate*, Tit. 1. 7, 8. Now, howſoever the *Law of a Nation* may give opportunity to wicked and ill-minded *Patrons* to preſent *Preachers*, like themſelves, to *Eccleſiaſtical Benefices*, under whoſe Miniſtry Men well affected to Religion may groan, but not be able to help themſelves, yet none but *Madmen*, when they have their Choice, will give their Votes to *ſuch*; and God has certainly a Controverſie with any people whom he gives over to ſuch Deluſions.

For what can a good Chriſtian learn from ſuch a Man, whoſe *Life* is a contradiction to his *Doctrine?* I tell a wicked lewd Wretch from the Pulpit, That *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge*; it affects him at preſent, but ſoon after he takes me in the very Act, or in the lewd Preliminaries to it; his Thoughts are quiet preſently, he's ſure I don't believe my *Doctrine* my ſelf, and why ſhould he? I declare againſt *Swearing and Prophaneneſs*, and denounce God's Vengeance againſt the Guilty; but will it work at all upon that Man who finds me paſſionate and mad, and as ready to take God's Name in vain as other Men? I preach againſt *Drunken-*

neſs and Intemperance; but will a Sot reform himſelf a whit the ſooner, when he finds *me ſtrong to Wine, and mighty to pour in ſtrong Drink*, and ready to indulge my ſelf in that ſin at leaſt on every *private Opportunity?* I recommend *Hoſpitality* and *Almſgiving* by many and weighty and Arguments, but can they melt down the hard hearted Churl, when he ſees me expenſive and waſtful in other things, but adminiſtring no Comfort nor Relief to the craving Poor? Will a Sermon of mine againſt *Covetouſneſs* or *Injuſtice* do any good upon the *Guilty*, when I can *Gripe* and uſe *Extortion* my ſelf, injure others both by Word and Deed, and never think of *doing by them as they would they ſhould do to me?* All which, and a thouſand more Inſtances which might be given, ſhew us how reaſonably the Apoſtle expoſtulates with ſuch, *Behold thou knoweſt the Will of God, and approveſt the things that are more excellent, and art confident that thou thy ſelf art a guide of the blind, a light to ſuch as are in darkneſs, an Inſtructor of the fooliſh, a teacher of babes, which haſt the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law: Thou therefore who teacheſt, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf? thou, who preacheſt a man ſhould not ſteal, doſt thou ſteal? thou, who ſayſt a man ſhould not commit adultery, doſt thou commit adultery? thou, who abhorreſt Idols, doſt thou commit ſacrilege? thou, who makeſt thy boaſt of the Law, through breaking the law diſhonoureſt thou God?* Rom. 2. 18,——23.

But what a *Scandal* does the *ill Practice* of a *Clergy-man* bring upon the *Goſpel?* How ready are Lewd and Atheiſtical Wretches to take advantages againſt *Religion*, when the pretendedly zealous Miniſters expoſe themſelves and their Offices by their Follies and Inadvertencies? The ſeveral *Clans* of *Sectaries* endeavour indeed, as far as poſſible, to conceal the Crimes of their Leaders from vulgar Eyes; but it's their Intereſt to *find out* or *make faults* in thoſe who have a lawful Commiſſion from Heaven, and to publiſh the moſt improbable

bable *Hearſay* on the *Houſe-tops*, for *it is by this craft that many of them get their Livelihoods.* Therefore ſuch Men as give them juſt Occaſion of Reflection ought to receive no Encouragement till the Evidence of their *Reformation* is as notorious as that of their *Miſcarriages.* It is through ſuch that *the Name of God is Blaſphemed among the Enemies of Religion.* It was the Cry even of ſuch Enemies in Antient Times, *How good muſt that God needs be, whoſe Servants are ſo good!* and it's too eaſy a thing to a prejudic'd Mind to reverſe the Expreſſion, and to infer *how little regard muſt be due to that God, whoſe ſervants can manage themſelves no better!* A *Faithful Miniſter of Chriſt* will lay no ſuch Burthens upon Others, as to the bearing of which he'll not be ready to put a Hand; but thinks himſelf very happy indeed when he can ſay to his People, without bluſhing, *Brethren, be ye followers together of me, and mark them who walk ſo as ye have us for an example, Phil.* 3. 17. Thus far then we have the Character of a *Good Paſtor*; He's *one of and in whom men may learn, and hear, and ſee only what's good and tends to Edification.* But,

2. The Text gives us the Character and Duty of a *truly Pious People.* They ought to hear, to believe, and to put in practiſe what they learn, hear and ſee in and of ſuch a Miniſter; *that do*, ſaith the Text; but *Faith comes by hearing*, and ſhews its ſelf in Converſation: The Peoples Duty then is,

1. To *hear what the lawful Meſſenger of Heaven delivers in proſecution of his Duty.* A Preacher without Hearers, an Inſtructor without Scholars, a Shepherd without a Flock, are Abſurdities; but, as we are willing to hear a *Statute* read, on the Obſervation of which our *Lives and Fortunes* depend, ſo much more ſhould we be ready to hear the *Laws of God*, the Obedience or Diſobedience to which infers our *Salvation* or *Damnation.* God *ſo loved the world, that he ſent his only begotten Son into it, that whoſoever believes in him ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life: It's a faithful ſaying* indeed,

and

and worthy of all acceptation; but the Question comes in presently, *How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall hear without a Preacher? and how shall they preach unless they be sent?* Rom. 10. 14, 15. From whence we learn, That none can *Preach indeed*, or to any purpose, *but such as are lawfully Ordained to that Work*; and that those who are so sent, and none else, ought to be attended to. But as there's a *We* entail'd upon those in *holy Orders* if they *do not Preach the Gospel*, so the Woe's as heavy upon the *People*, who will not give ear when the Lord hath spoken by them.

While Men run eagerly after it, and long to be *satisfied with the Bread of Life*, the enjoyment of it is an inestimable *Blessing*: When they neglect and slight it, it brings Curses upon them with the most insupportable Aggravations. It looks dismally in such a City as this, when the Streets are overgrown with Grass, because the raging Pestilence has laid heaps upon heaps in the midst of it; and is it not as astonishing a sight, when the *Ways of Sion* mourn? and the *Paths leading to God's House are unoccupied, and the Travellers pass thro' By-ways?* There is indeed in some a *Spirit of Laziness*, in others a *Spirit of Giddiness*, which teaches them to make a thousand frivolous Pretences for the neglect of their Duty; and yet, if we'll believe them, they'd fain be *saved* for all this: But how? Is it reasonable for *Rebels* to claim an Interest in their *Soverein?* For *lazy Creatures* to expect *Wages?* for *Weather Cocks* and *Changlings* to claim the Rewards of *Loyalty?* Or can any Man dream of *Happiness* hereafter, who *casts God's Testimonies behind his back*, and won't attend the offers of a Crown? God has appointed one day in seven particularly for his own Service; It was his *Right* to do so, and his *Goodness* that he would condescend to do so; *every Day* we ought to acquaint our selves with his Will, and to approach and humble our selves on our Knees before him; but on *that Day*, above all, our attendance should be in earnest.

neſt. We ſhould be eager and early to *watch the goings of our God and King in his Sanctuaries*; His *Houſe* indeed *is the Houſe of Prayer*, that's the Character its more particularly known by. Yet *there* too we have the opportunity of *hearing his Word read*, of hearing it *explained*, and *applied* to our particular Uſes, and is not this a Privilege for which we ought to adore the Mercy and Compaſſion of our God? Should ſuch a *Prize* be put into Mens hands, and ſhall they not make uſe of it? Does not the *Book of Life* concern us? Were we indicted for Capital Crimes before a Judge, and condemned, would not a *Reprieve* or a *Pardon* be very welcom? Would we not hear it read with the greateſt attention? We are thoſe *Wretched Criminals* who, from the Hand of *God*, have deſerved no leſs than *Eternal Vengeance*; The Word of *God*, that God who is and muſt be *our Judge*; that very Word, by which we muſt be try'd, contains the offer of a *Pardon*; from *that* we learn how dearly *that Pardon* has been purchaſed for us: *God's Ambaſſadors* are appointed to proclaim it in our Ears; to interpret it to us faithfully: And ſhall we not liſten earneſtly to *that*, which teaches us how we may eſcape *everlaſting Burnings?* We talk of knowing much, but I'm ſure he who knows not his Duty in this reſpect, knows nothing yet as he ought to know. However, whether unhappy *Sinners will hear, or whether they will forbear*, our Buſineſs lies before *Us:* We ſhall be accountable for our Neglect of that; if we *do* it diligently and impartially, the *People* may periſh, but *we* have diſcharg'd our own Souls.

2. What *we hear from Faithful lawful Miniſters, we are to receive or to embrace*, we are to believe it heartily. Not but that the *beſt of Paſtors* may be miſtaken, eſpecially if they depend too much upon their own Learning and Underſtandings. But a *Miniſter ſo qualified*, will be very careful not to give *People Stones* for *Bread*; and, that he may not, he'll ever beg his *Maſter's* Divine Aſſiſtance to enable him to be

ſuch

ſuch a *Workman* as needs not to be aſhamed; and God is not wont to deny that to thoſe who faithfully ask it. But, after all, our Saviour gives a neceſſary Rule, *Take heed how you hear*, Luke 8. 18. *What you hear*, ſays St. *Matthew*; *i. e.* examine well what's delivered to you in the Name of God, let no humane Authority ſway you to believe any thing contrary to what you find there. The force of which Direction is fully cleared by what our Saviour ſays elſewhere to the Phariſees, *Search the Scriptures*, John 5. 39. and what the *Bereans* are commended for, *Acts* 17. 11. *Theſe were more noble than thoſe of Theſſalonica, in that they received the Word with all readineſs of mind, and ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether thoſe things were ſo; Therefore many of them believed.* A Man, who will take pains, will eaſily find out whether the Doctrine preach'd be agreeable to the *general import of Scripture*, for, whatſoever *that is*, every *particular Text of Scripture* is agreeable to it, and muſt be explained by it; and, if any Man affix another Senſe on any *ſingle Text*, or preach any Doctrine, which is not agreeable to that general Tenour of Scripture, that Doctrine is to be rejected.

But it is only ſuch Doctrine which may be rejected; that which is ſound and good ought to be embraced and to be believed readily, at our utmoſt peril. To what purpoſe do I Preach, or you hear, if you don't believe? If I ſpeak not the *Mind of God*, if I deliver not what tends to the *Honour of God* and *your Salvation*, it's time loſt to hear me. If I preach the *Truth as it is in Chriſt Jeſus*, why do you not *believe* me? Has the *Word of God* any thing really *incredible* in it? I renounce it then, I'm ſure it's none of his. Is there any thing in it which *ſeems incredible* to my *Reaſon?* It argues that my *Reaſon*'s vitiated, not that the *Word of God*'s defective: other Men have *Reaſon* as well as I, and it's as freely exerciſed, and its as well improved as mine; they are fully ſatisfied of the Truth of many very *difficult things*;

why

why ſhould they not be as *credible* to me? The true Reaſon of this is, *They* acknowledge their own Weakneſs, they value and beg the aſſiſtance of *God's Spirit*, which *leads them* effectually *into all Truth*; I admire my own *Wit* and *Reaſon*, and build mightily upon *them*, and ſo fall into *every Error*. Faith is the Gift of God, the *meek* and *lowly* have it, the *proud* and *opiniative* know nothing of the Matter. But, if the *Meſſengers of Chriſt* really deliver *his Will* to Men, it will be no excuſe to ſay, *We don't believe them*; they'll be dreadful Witneſſes againſt us at the laſt day; and our Caſe will be as bad as that of the *Iſraelites* of old, they could not enter into the *Earthly*, nor ſhall we get admiſſion into the *Heavenly Canaan*, *becauſe of unbelief*. But few are willing to own, that they don't believe the *Word of God*; the *Teſt* of their *Faith* follows immediately, *i. e.*

3. Their *Practice*, or acting according to their Belief. *That which ye have learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, that do. Practice* is the only *Evidence* of *Faith*, and without the *firſt* all the Pretences to the *laſt* are vain; True *Faith* and Holy *Works* are *relatives*, and ſuppoſe and take away one another. *Faith without Works is dead, Works without Faith are inſignificant*; hence the Apoſtle St. *James*, when he had adviſed us before, that, *laying apart all filthineſs and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, we would receive with meekneſs the engrafted Word, which is able to ſave our ſouls*, James 1. 21. He immediately adds, ver. 22. *But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own ſouls:* No *Deceit* is more dangerous than what our Souls ſuffer by; no *Deceit* is more certain than when we imagine God will accept of our *readineſs to hear*, without any regard to our exactneſs in Practice. Peace, and Quietneſs, and common Good are what every one, not only as a *Chriſtian*, but as a *Man*, ought to aim at. But wherein do all the ſoundeſt Doctrines tend to advance theſe things, if thoſe Doctrines are not reduced to Practice in Mens Lives and Converſations? If I am a Brawler, if Quar-

relſom and Litigious, and continue ſo, though I every day hear Sermons and Diſcourſes tending to Peace and Unity, what am I the better for them? they'll bear Witneſs againſt me indeed, in caſe of an irreclaimable Temper, but can do me no ſervice either in this, or in a future World. It's a great Privilege to have opportunities of *Hearing*, and unhappy are thoſe *People* whoſe *Faithful Paſtors* are driven into Corners. Great was the Character for a Man to be related to our *Saviour according to the Fleſh*, yet neither of 'em comparable to Practice and Obedience, if we may give any Credit to our Maſter; *yea, rather happy are they who hear the Word of God, and keep it*, Luke 11. 28. The other Privileges may be enjoy'd, and thoſe who enjoy them may periſh for ever. Holy *Practice* proves and demonſtrates a ſincere *Faith*, and *Faith* juſtifies us in the ſight of God. *If ye know good things, therefore happy are ye if ye do them*; and if ye know never ſo much, without ſuch Practice ye are altogether unhappy.

Not every one who ſaith to me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven; is our Saviour's unchangeable determination, *Matth.* 7. 21. Here then we may take ſome notice of the Diſcourſe of Chriſtians concerning *Edification*: *Edifying*, primarily, ſignifies *raiſing up a Building on a Foundation already laid: Edifying*, in a ſpiritual ſenſe, ſignifies *making a compleat Chriſtian upon Principles of ſound Faith laid in before*, ſo that the Perſon truly Edified is one upon whom the Word of God preach'd makes ſuch impreſſions, that he grows larger every day, and wiſer by it in his *Underſtanding*, and better in his *Practice*; his *Faith*, as it's ſound and good at firſt, by the help of what he hears, ſo the *Fruits of that Faith* are *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs*; which, if true, then no Man can be ſaid to *edifie by a Sermon*, who does not grow *wiſer* and *better* by it; nor can any one be ſaid to be a more *edifying Paſtor* or *Teacher* than others, whoſe *Flock* are not clearer in their *Faith*, and ſounder and more innocent in their

their *Practiſes* than other Men. But if Men ſhould hear an *Angel from Heaven* preach, according to his Nature, nothing but what's *Holy* and *Divine*, and ſhould not be able to give a *better account* of their *Faith*, nor farther *correct their Manners* after they had heard *him*, it muſt be owned, that even *ſuch a Sermon* from *ſuch a Preacher*, is not edifying to the Hearer. If he does not Preach what's ſound and good, I am apt to think no Man in his Senſes, will believe he *edifies* thoſe he preaches to. *Edification*, in the ſubject of it, is in plain Scripture terms, *Growing in Grace and in the Knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt*; where *that*'s wanting, *all the reſt* is but idle talk. An *edifying Preacher* will preach to himſelf firſt, convince himſelf, and prove himſelf a Chriſtian by his Chriſtian Life and Behaviour. The *Phyſician* is of no value who can't heal himſelf; nor the *Preacher*, who has not affected his *own Reformation*. St. *Paul* was but *weak in ſpeech, and deſpicable in perſon*, 2 Cor. 10. 10. yet he built up more *Chriſtians* by the Purity and Exemplarineſs of his *Life*, than all the *popular Orators* in the World. Its poſſible a Man may hit his way who has a *wicked Guide*, but he's a great deal more likely to do ſo, who has one Honeſt and Skilful too. Empty *Harangues* can ſave none, but ſound *Faith* and good *Practice* may. This *attentive hearing* then, this *Faith* and this *Practice* will be crowned.

3. By that *Happineſs* which the Apoſtle promiſes in the Text, *The God of Peace will be with them*, their *Boſoms* ſhall be quiet and eaſie, and the *Spirit of Peace* ſhall reſt upon them. A quiet Conſcience is a Jewel of an ineſtimable Value; it's what thouſands, when they come on their Death-beds, would purchaſe with a thouſand Worlds if they could. *A wounded Spirit* or Conſcience none can bear; a *quiet Spirit* makes a *chearful Countenance*, and he, who has nothing to accuſe himſelf *within*, may laugh at the *Malice* and *Impudence* of all Mankind. We live in a *World* that's troubleſom enough, and the more a Man ſtudies to do well in it, the more he expoſes himſelf to the Hatred and Revenge of thoſe *who are ſet on fire*

of Hell. Our Saviour did no Sin, nor could any of his *Adverſaries* convince him of it, but our Saviour, becauſe his Innocence condemned a wicked World, was *hated, perſecuted, murdered.* The *Apoſtles* preached and practiſed, the *Primitive Chriſtians* believed and practiſed the beſt, the moſt *heavenly Things.* The generality of the *World* lived in Sin, and loved thoſe Sins they lived in, therefore they proſecuted thoſe *admirable Perſons* with indefatigable *Rage and Envy,* and it will be ſo to the end of the World; and he, who dares to be good, will be ſure to have all the *Sons of Darkneſs* near him about his Ears; *The wicked watcheth the Righteous, and ſeeketh to ſlay him,* Pſal. 37. 32. that Work is agreeable to his Nature, and the *Righteous* muſt be patient under it. A Son of *Belial* will bely and ſlander, he'll quarrel with and proſecute, he'll endeavour to raiſe Enemies, and encourage them in their Wickedneſs, againſt *thoſe who endeavour to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in an evil World.* Juſt Men are always *doing good,* endeavouring the Peace, and Aſſiſtance, and Support of others, the requital they have is commonly Baſeneſs, Ingratitude, Treachery, and down-right Villany: Yea, *his own familiar Friends, in whom he truſted, which did eat of his Bread, will preſume to lift up their heels againſt him,* as *David* complains, *Pſal.* 41. 9. and *David's* Lord, *John* 13. 18. Its true, ſuch *Judas's* commonly hang themſelves, and die unpitied, unlamented, yet theſe *Vermin* are as troubleſome to *good Men,* as the Plagues of *Flies* and *Lice* to the *Egyptians.* But how happy, in the midſt of all ſuch Vexations from abroad, are thoſe who have *peace with God,* and who, being conſcious of no guilt, no diſhoneſty, no injury done to any, can *Sleep* without diſturbance, can *Smile* without diſſembling, can *Converſe* without ſullenneſs, can *debate Matters* without paſſion, and *addreſs themſelves to God in Prayer* without any Fears of a denial. Nay, though the *Devil himſelf,* and *all his Emiſſaries* aſſault a Man of a clear Conſcience, let them endeavour to terrifie him with the inexorable *Juſtice*

of

of God, with the uſeleſneſs and impertinence of *Repentance*, with the boaſts of his own mighty *Power*, and the *unpardonableneſs of his paſt Crimes*, all theſe Suggeſtions vaniſh into Air, when a Man can, with *Hezekiah*, plead, *I beſeech thee remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which was good in thy ſight*, 2 Kings 20. 3. All the *Balm in Gilead* has not ſo healing a Vertue as ſuch Words in a ſincere Chriſtians Mouth.

Nor are the *Influences of the Spirit of Peace* of leſs Efficacy or leſs deſirable; they are agreeable to the *Nature* of *that Spirit* who imparts them, they are *Love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, Faith, meekneſs, temperance*, Gal. 5. 22,23. Love, that heavenly Grace by which we keep the Commandments; for *Love is the fulfilling of the Law*, it's *that* by which we *love God with all our ſouls*, and *our Neighbours as our ſelves*. Joy, that Grace which bears us up in the midſt of all worldly Troubles, ſo as *though the Figtree ſhould not bloſſom, neither ſhould fruit be in the Vines; though the labour of the Olive ſhould fail, and the Fields ſhould yield no encreaſe; tho the Flock ſhould be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhould be no Herd in the Stall; yet we may rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of our Salvation*, Habak. 3. 17, 18. Peace, that whereby we are reconciled to our heavenly Father in Chriſt Jeſus, whereby we are freed from inward Gripes and Pangs, and from the danger of outward Temptations, and can live quietly and charitably one among another. Long-ſuffering, whereby we are enabled to imitate God's dealing with us in Tranſactions among our ſelves; not to be paſſionate, fiery, revengeful, but *to bear with one another, and to forgive one another, as God, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, has forgiven us*. Gentleneſs, whereby we put off our fierce and brutal Natures, and ſhew true *Humanity* improv'd and perfected by *Grace*. Goodneſs, by which we diſtribute God's Bleſſings freely to the Indigent, Knowledge and Inſtruction to the Ignorant, and Meat,

Meat, and Drink, and Clothing to the poor and naked. Faith, by which our dependance upon God is entire and undoubting; and our *Fidelity and Juſtice toward Men* is unfailing and impartial. Meekneſs, whereby we can manage our ſelves decently with our *Brethren*, not being captious, not peeviſh, not eaſily provoked, not overweening of our ſelves, but ready and deſirous to be *perſuaded in temporal*, and *inſtructed in ſpiritual Matters*. And Temperance, by which we can uſe all God's Creatures with Sobriety and Moderation, not ruffle our *Minds*, nor diſtemper our *Bodies*, but maintain and improve our Conſtitutions ſo, as we may at all times be fit for the *Service of God*, and the *Performance of our Duties towards Men*. Theſe are the *Graces* which we want, you, and I, and every one; and, *if you do thoſe things which you have learned, and received, and heard, and ſeen in me, you too ſhall be partakers of theſe Bleſſings*.

And, if there be any ſuch thing as *Truth* in Mankind, this is what, above my own *Life*, or if there's any thing dearer than *Life* to *me*, I aim at, and beg of Heaven for *you*. It may perhaps ſeem *bold* in me to uſe the *Apoſtle's Words*; but knowing that *I have exerciſed my ſelf herein, to keep a Conſcience always void of offence toward you*, and having in all things endeavoured to diſcharge my Duty to you, ſo as becomes a *Miniſter of Chriſt Jeſus*, I have a *right* to ſpeak ſo. The Words I now ſpeak are *the laſt*, in all probability, which I ſhall ſpeak to you from hence: Look on me here as your *dying Teacher*, who had ſent for you to attend his Death-bed, and expiring Words; the very Circumſtance might perhaps make you conſider what I ſay with greater tenderneſs; but they'd be *the ſame* as now, and could not be uttered with more Sincerity or Affection. And as ever *you* expect to meet *me* with Comfort at the great Tribunal, let my words now ſink into your Ears. I will not talk of *having the Rule over you*; it's plain enough that I have not; but I'd have you, if poſſible, always

always *remember him who has ſpoken to you the word of God, and follow his Faith, remembring the end of his Converſation, Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday, to day and for ever*, Hebr. 13. 7, 8. That is *my End*, and that I hope will always be *yours*, and, that it may be ſo, think a little ſeriouſly on theſe things.

1. Conſider what *Doctrines* I have preached; I won't imagine you ſhould remember *all* I have ſaid for almoſt ſix Years together, but reflect a little on the *general Deſign* of what you have *heard*, and, I hope, have *received*. I have *followed no cunningly deviſed Fables*; I have medled with no nice or *impertinent Queſtions*; I have brought in no new *fangled Doctrines*, which might confound or miſlead unwary Souls; nor have you ever heard *one Word* from me, tending to promote my *own Intereſts*. Your Salvation was what I aim'd at, what might conduce to *that* I preach'd, and, as I have told you more than once, ſo now again, if I have any knowledge of my own Heart, *I had rather be an Inſtrument to ſave one Soul, than be advanced to the greateſt Dignities in the World*. My Reſolution among you ever was to *teach you the true and the right Way*; and I never brought any thing to be deliver'd here, but what I had implored the Bleſſing of my God upon before I came hither: I always knew that *Paul might plant, and* Apollo *might water, but it was God only who could give the increaſe*, and to him only I looked for it. I have *ſtudied* among you, not to prove my ſelf of *mighty Learning*, but to explain and clear up neceſſary and *important Truths*; and on whatſoever Point I have diſcourſed to you, I have endeavoured to *declare to you the whole Counſel of God* in that particular. I have not ſtudied *Words* ſo much as *Things*, and yet I have ſought for *acceptable Words* too, as concluding that *good Language* might conſiſt well enough with the *ſimplicity of Inſtruction*. I need not mention how great and how conſtant my *Pains* have been, all, who have attended here, can witneſs that, which I mention, not to boaſt of, but to celebrate

God's

God's goodneſs, who has bleſt me with Health and Strength to perform it. I have endeavoured to inculcate *Truth* in the *beſt Methods* I could, that its Impreſſions might be the deeper. I have *Catechiſed* as many of your Children as, with your leave, I might, that I ſhould have had more of *that Employment*, would have been my *Delight*, and was your *Duty*: May Almighty God never lay that great Sin to your Charge, nor avenge it on you or your Poſterity. I have explained the *Catechiſm* at large, and have almoſt gone through it *four times*, that thoſe of elder Years might recover the *Principles* of their *Religion*, and *remember* what's too eaſily *forgotten*. I have explained that admirable *Lyturgy*, which our *Holy Mother* has appointed for *Publick Worſhip*, that, underſtanding it throughly, you might value it juſtly, and praiſe God for ſo excellent Aſſiſtances in Devotion. I have explained all the *Articles of our Faith*, not according to the new ways of *Unitarians* and *Atheiſts*, but according to the genuine *Tenour* of *Scripture*, and the *current Senſe* of unwreſted *Antiquity*. I have laid before you the meaning of every *Commandment*, not in that narrow way which ſome would confine them to, but in that full ſenſe of which the beſt of *Preachers* has given us a *Pattern* in his Sermon on the Mount. I have explained that heavenly *Form of Prayer*, which the Son of God taught his own Apoſtles, a Form perfect in every reſpect, which he who uſes not with Reverence, can never be a Chriſtian. I have inſtructed you in the *Nature* of *both Sacraments*, more eſpecially that of the *Lord's-Supper*; and, though I can't boaſt of any extraordinary Succeſs, I have endeavoured from time to time, by *Preparatory Sermons*, to fit *You* for that *Holy Communion*. I have taken every accidental Opportunity to inculcate ſeaſonable *Truths*, to which the Circumſtances of Time might beſt prepare you. And as I have generally done my Work my ſelf, ſo if *Illneſs* or *Neceſſity* has at any time required help of others, I have provided ſuch as at leaſt were never the Scandal either

either of the *Gown* or *Pulpit*. Thus have *I preached* among you, and thus have *you received*, and have ſeemed to receive the *Word with gladneſs*; I have *kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have ſhew'd you, and have taught you publickly*, and, as any have deſired it, *from Houſe to Houſe*, I have ſown *good Seed*, God grant the *Ground* may be but *fruitful!*

2. Conſider what my *Life* and *Practice* has been among you. I don't pretend to Sinleſneſs, I know my ſelf and my own Frailties too well: *Forgive them all, O bleſſed Father, for thy dear Son's ſake! Waſh them all out for ever, O holy Jeſus, in thy moſt precious blood! Change me in the renewal of my mind, O Divine Almighty Spirit! Cleanſe me, O my God, from my ſecret ſins, and grant that preſumptuous ſins may have no dominion over me!* I know my Sins are great and many, but I have not made you the *Witneſſes* of them; nor can I accuſe my ſelf of having lead you into any by my Example. I'm ſure I have defended no *Heretical*, no dangerous *Opinions* among you, to ſubvert your *Faith*; but I have endeavoured to keep out all ſuch Notions from among you, and to *watch over you, as one who muſt give an account of your Souls.* If I have ſerved *any other God* in my Heart, that's beyond your diſcovery; but whom have I ever taught to *take God's Name in vain*, to *Swear*, to *Curſe*, to *Blaſpheme*, or to ſpeak any thing unbecoming their Profeſſion? Whom have I lead into *Perjury*, or inſtructed to break their *ſolemn Vows*, or common *humane Obligations?* If I have taught any to ſpend the *Lord's Day* lazily, wickedly, in Fields, in Taverns, in lewd Company, or to deſpiſe or undervalue that ſacred Time: If I have taught them to Diſhonour their Parents, Natural, Civil or Temporal; to entertain rebellious or murmuring Thoughts, or to ſpeak ſcandalouſly or ignorantly of our Superiors: If I have Proſecuted any with Revenge or Malice upon the moſt notorious Provocations; have belyed, defamed or injured any Man knowingly, either in their Life, Body or Eſtate: If I have know-

ingly convers'd, unleſs on their *ſick* and *death Beds*, with any of ill *Fame*, or have connived at, or fear'd to reprove the *Guilty*, of what Rank or Quality ſoever: If I have cheated, over-reached, defrauded any, whatever uſage I have met with from Ingrateful Brutes, or ſenſeleſs Villains: If I have oppreſt or wrong'd the *Poor*, or acted unjuſtly by the *Rich*: If I have *born falſe Witneſs* againſt any, or traduc'd or ſlandered the Innocent, or have ſhewn any griping or covetous Humour: If I ſet any pattern of *Drunkenneſs* or *Intemperance* of any ſort: If I have knowingly been Guilty of *Breach* of *Promiſe*, *Lying*, *Falſhood* or *Treachery*: If I have been *Contentious* or Quarrelſom with any Man, or have not rather *ſuffered Wrong* in abundance, of which I carry the terrible Scars about me to this day, rather than *Sue* or *Proſecute the Injurious*: If I have been guilty of any of theſe things, let all, who know it, witneſs againſt me. I ſtand here before God and you this day, and challenge the beſt *mettal'd Brow*, and the moſt *impudent Tongue* to prove any of theſe things againſt me. And if they cannot, look you to it, if you be Guilty of any of theſe Sins which I have always *preached* againſt from *hence*, and in *my Life and Converſation*.

3. Conſider what my *Love has been*, *and how expreſſed to you*. I may have *preach'd the Truth*, and have *practiſed* agreeably, and both for my *own ſake*; but it could not be for my own ſake, that I quitted my Pretences to a *Certainty*, to come among you, from whom, upon my *Acquaintance* or *Proviſion made to that purpoſe*, I could promiſe my ſelf *nothing*. The Succeſs was wonderful and encouraging, till *Hell* and *wicked Men* enrag'd at it, ſow'd *Diviſions* among us, and ruin'd one of the moſt *promiſing Deſigns* that this Age had known. I could not but be a looſer by it, yet you always found me the *ſame Man*, and, however my *Livelihood* fell ſhort, you never heard any Murmuring or Repining from me. I was not quite deprived yet of opportunity to *Inſtruct you*; and, that I might

do

do *good* to *you*, I took upon me a task above common ſtrength, I ſerved others that I might more comfortably ſerve you, and not be a burthen to you. If in any thing I have failed of my Duty, I heartily beg Pardon both of God and you. I might have ſerved you farther, but was forbidden, and I hope have not any thing on that account to anſwer for. But *my Hearts deſire*, ſince I firſt knew you, has been, and ſtill *is for you all, Brethren, that you might be ſaved.* I have loved my *private Friends*, I have loved my *Family*, I have loved my *Life*, but, I call God to witneſs, I have loved the *Houſe of God*, and you the *Inhabitants of it more than all*, and for your good, can as freely lay down all my worldly Comforts, as I could ever *take them up*; I have coveted no Man's Silver, nor Gold, nor Apparel, but have by indefatigable Toils in ſome meaſures, *adminiſtred to the Neceſſities of my ſelf, and thoſe about me.* I cannot indeed complain, that all my *Affections* have been ſown on *barren Ground*; you have been kind to me according to your Abilities, and, had *Trading* and *Buſineſs* flouriſh'd more, I make no doubt but that I, among the reſt, ſhould have been ſenſible of it: May that God, whoſe Servant I am, requite all your Kindneſſes to *me* in *your own Boſoms*: May *he* Proſper the Works of your hands to you, and may he pour upon your Heads Bleſſings, Temporal, Spiritual and Eternal! And now I am ſuddenly going into another Country, *not knowing the things which may befal me there*, you have my *Prayers*, let me have yours; I hope our God will hear us both. I doubt not but on my departure raveningWolves will endeavour to make a Prey of you; I ſee too unhappy preſages of it already; may *God* in mercy divert my *Fear*, and may *he*, of his Goodneſs, if you maintain this, ſend a *ſober*, *pious*, and *exemplary Preacher* to take care of you, and to live among you: I know of no *Intereſts* I can ſerve by theſe Wiſhes but *yours*; and I muſt be the moſt *treacherous Enemy* of your Souls, if I ſhould not ſo pray and ſo endeavour. When you have one whoſe

Doctrine

Doctrine you may *learn* and *receive*, whose *Life* you may *hear of, and see, and imitate*, and yet be holy and undefiled before God; He, *the God of Peace will be with you*; but if, unhappily, you should go otherwise to work, God *cannot bless you*, nor can *Love*, or *Peace*, or *Charity* have any long residence among you. For my *Family*, which, for a few days, I must leave among you, I recommend them to your Love; *Some* I'm sure will have a just respect to them and me in them. I know their *Tempers* and their *Inclinations*, so that I can entertain no Jealousies of them, and *God*, I'm sure, *is not unrighteous that he should forget their Works and Labours that proceed of Love, which Love they have shew'd to me and mine for his Name's sake*. I would not have any think I ask your *Alms*, but I desire your *Justice*, and I'm sure neither *I* nor *mine* have given any just reason for any to deny it. But enough of this, enough of every thing, tenderness may be apt to overflow its bounds, but it must be confin'd. If I have offended any, really I seriously beg their *Pardons*: If any have offended me, they have *mine*, and may the God of Heaven forgive us all. *And now, Brethren, I commend you to God and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I beseech you, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that in those things which are truly good, you would all speak the same thing, and that there be no Divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment. I pray God that ye do no Evil, not that I should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is excellent, though I should be as a Reprobate. Finally, Brethren, farewel; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of Love and Peace shall be with you.*

Amen! Amen!

317911